



What people think,
feel and do

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Vodafone

Domestic Violence and the workplace 2021



Key findings

23 November 2021

Project details

PROJECT NUMBER	OP17422
PROJECT NAME	Domestic Violence and the workplace 2021
CLIENT COMPANY NAME	Vodafone
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SAMPLE	4,762 workers in the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, South Africa, India, Turkey, Kenya and Ireland. Of whom 1,540 have experienced domestic abuse
FIELDWORK DATES	1 st - 20 th September 2021

Experience of domestic abuse

One in three workers have experienced domestic abuse

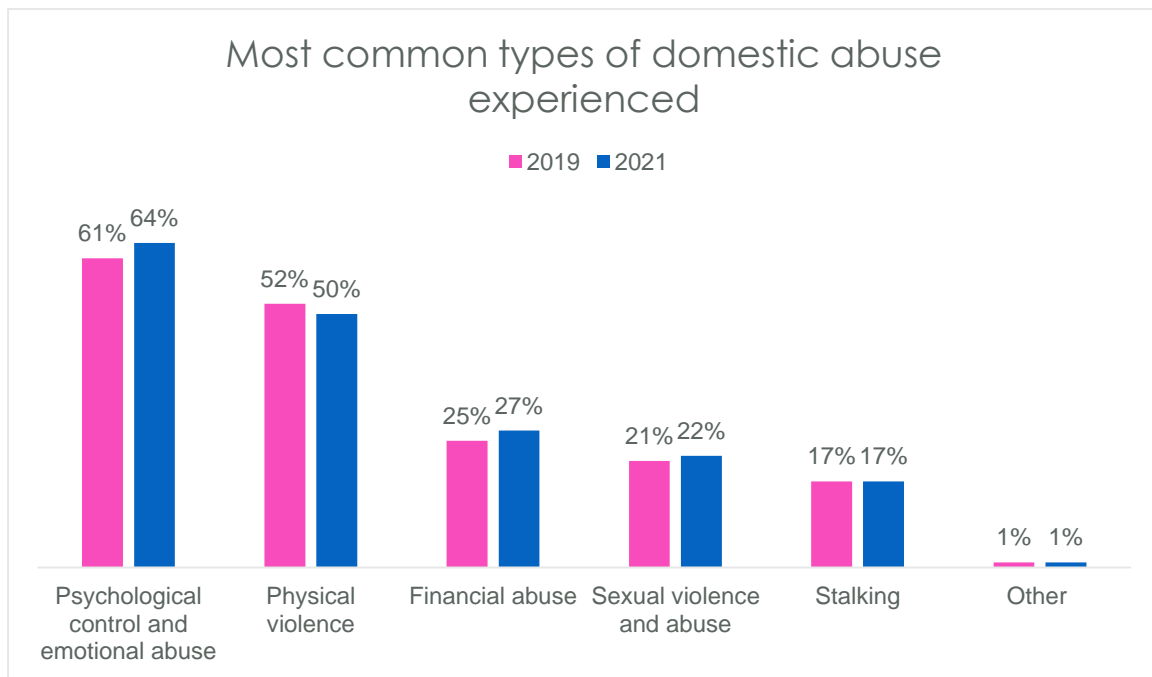
One in three (32%) workers say they have experienced domestic abuse from a current or past intimate partner/family member/carer.

Workers who have experienced domestic abuse were most likely to have experienced this in their childhood (40%), followed by when they were working (35%). The proportion of people saying they experienced this when working has increased slightly from 2019 (29% two years ago).

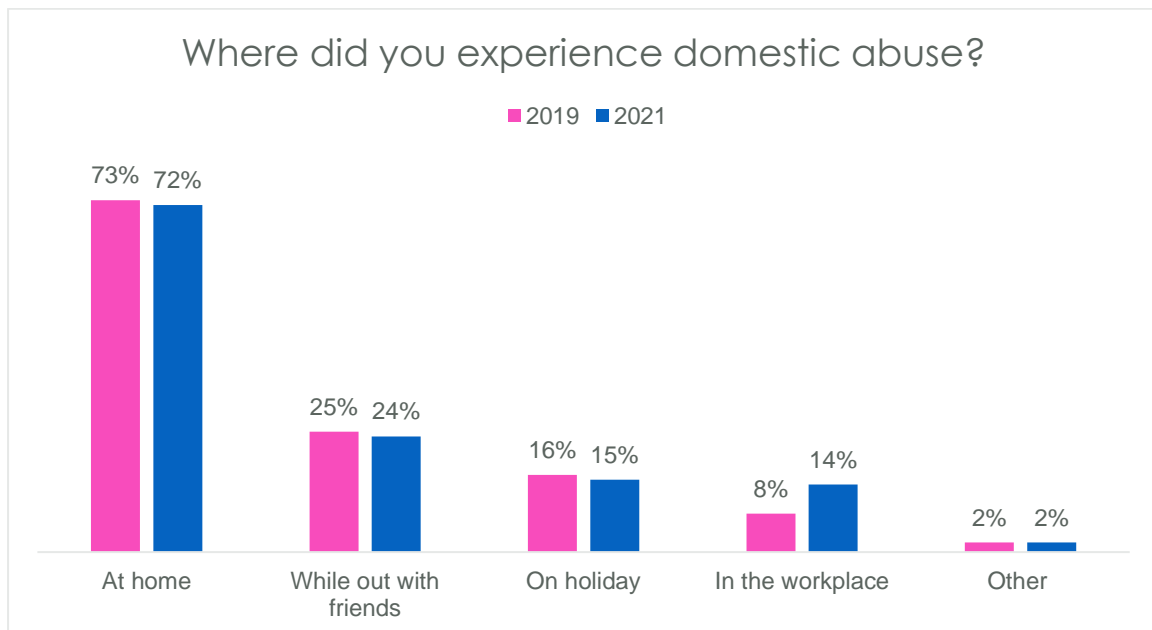
Almost two fifths (38%) of mothers who have experienced domestic abuse after childhood, said they faced this abuse while they were pregnant or on maternity leave.

Psychological control and emotional abuse is the most common type of domestic abuse

Of those who have experienced domestic abuse, psychological control and emotional abuse (64%) is the most common type of abuse experienced, followed by physical violence (50%). This remains similar to 2019.



Turning to look at where domestic abuse is taking place, the proportion of workers saying this has happened in the workplace has increased compared to two years ago (14% in 2021 vs 8% in 2019)

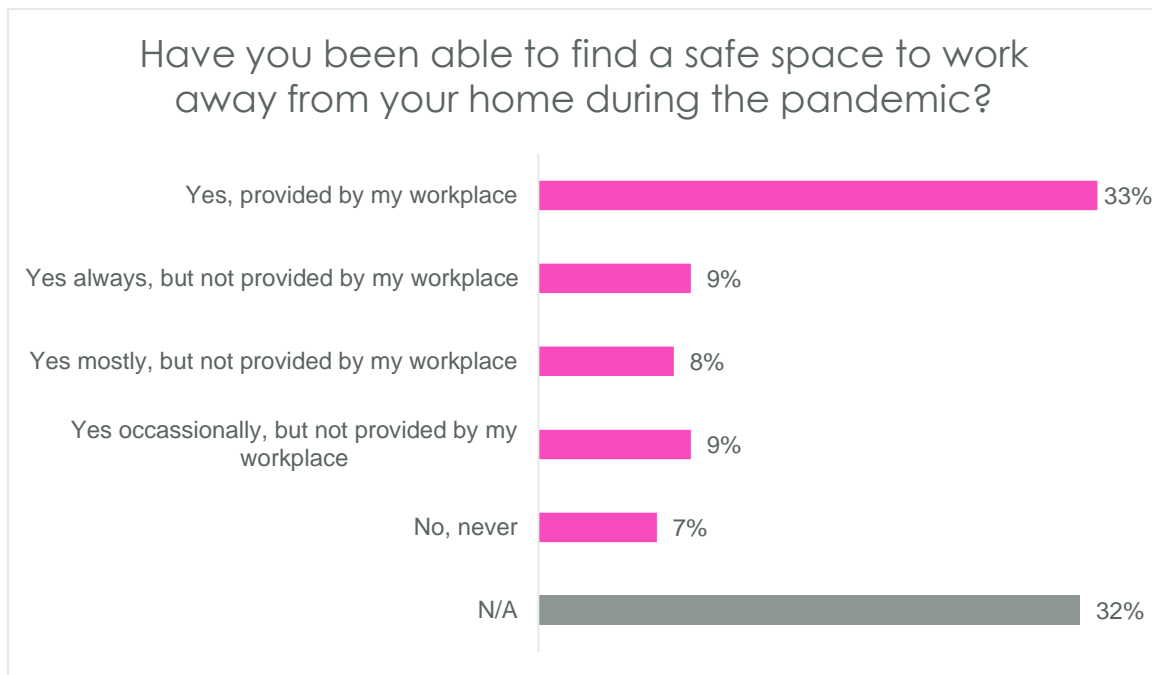


Impact during the pandemic

The frequency of domestic abuse has increased for many during the pandemic

Of those who have experienced domestic abuse in the last year, over half (56%) have experienced an increase in frequency of the domestic abuse they faced during of the Coronavirus pandemic.

With many workplaces having to close fully or partly because of the pandemic, a third (33%) of those who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year say their workplace has provided access to a safe space to work (33%). A further one in ten (9%) said they were always able to access a safe space, although not provided by their workplace. 7% were unable to access a safe space.



Awareness of domestic abuse

Half of workers know someone who is or has experienced domestic abuse

Half (52%) of workers surveyed said they know someone who they think is or has previous experienced domestic abuse. One in six (18%) know a family member who has experienced this, while a third (32%) have a friend who has and one in ten (10%) know of a colleague who has faced this.

Of those who know someone that has experienced domestic abuse (excluding those who have personally faced abuse), this abuse was most likely to come from an intimate partner (67%), followed by a family member (29%). The abuse the person they know faced was most likely to have occurred while they were in their working life stage (52%), while a fifth (22%) experienced this when they were in college/university and a similar proportion experienced it in their childhood (23%). The abuse most experienced involved psychological control and emotional abuse (60%), followed by physical violence (54%).

Workers who experience abuse are more likely to confide in their loved ones than their colleagues

Of those who have experienced domestic abuse in their working life stage, just under two fifths (37%) said a colleague was aware about this, with 20% directly telling their co-worker and 17% saying they think their colleague knew but they did not tell them.

Of those who told a colleague about their abuse, seven in ten (70%) discussed this with a colleague, followed by their supervisor or manager (39%), Human Resources/Personnel department (29%) and a designated person to handle situations of domestic abuse (20%).

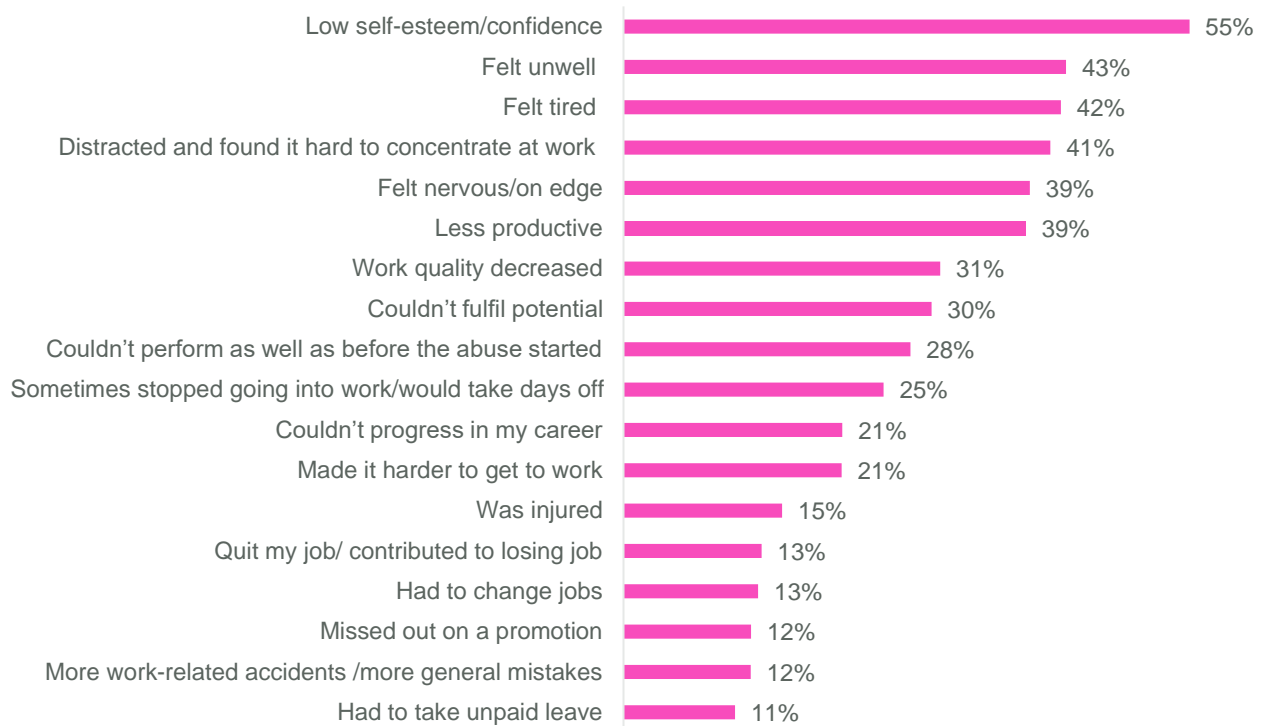
It is instead more likely that family (61%) and friends (59%) would be aware of the abuse in comparison to colleagues as those who experience abuse are more likely to confide in their loved ones (46% told a friend and 43% told a family member).

Impact of abuse

Domestic abuse has a range of negative impacts on work performance

Almost all (94%) workers who have experienced domestic abuse in their working life stage say this has had a negative impact on their work performance. The most common types of impact were low confidence/self-esteem (55%) and feeling unwell (43%) or tired (42%) because of the abuse.

Ways in which the domestic abuse impacted work performance



Many also thought that the domestic abuse they experienced impacted on their career progression, with a third (32%) saying it had a serious affect, and 35% saying it had a moderate impact.

Children also experience a range of negative impacts from knowing about domestic abuse

Half (49%) of workers who have experienced abuse in their working life stage and who have children say their dependent children were aware about the abuse that they faced at the time, with three in ten (29%) saying their dependent child witnessed the abuse (29%). This had a negative impact on the child, with half saying their child was upset (54%) or scared (53%) by the abuse. Two fifths (40%) said their child felt anxious as a result, while 44% said their child wanted to be with them more.

The negative impacts extended to their education, with a quarter (24%) saying that their child started having problems at school, and 12% saying their child missed days off school as a result.

Workplace support

Many workers who experience abuse have their abuser try to reach them in/ around their workplace

The workplace is a safe haven for many of those who experience domestic abuse. Seven in ten (71%) of those who have experienced domestic abuse while in their working life stage found that the workplace allowed them to be themselves in a way they could not be at home. A similar proportion (72%) said the workplace provided them with a feeling of safety compared to their home, and 69% said they felt valued at work compared to home.

However, for some the workplace is an area where they see their abuser. Over a quarter (29%) of those who have experienced abuse in their working life stage were working in the same workplace as the abusive person (29%). Further to this, many have experienced harassment near the workplace: just under a fifth (19%) of those who have experienced domestic abuse said the abusive person stalked or harassed them near the workplace, or that the abusive person came to their workplace (17%), with 14% saying the abusive person even went so far as to contact their co-workers or employers about them.

As the above shows, it is vital that workplaces are actively thinking about what domestic violence and abuse support they provide to their employees. The research shows only 16% of workers say their workplace has a dedicated domestic abuse policy, with no increase from 2019.

Workplace support is most helpful in raising awareness and spotting signs of abuse early

Of those who have workplace support for domestic violence, it has been most helpful in raising awareness (46%), and in helping to understand how to spot signs of abuse early to help with early intervention (41%).

WAYS IN WHICH WORKPLACE SUPPORT OR TRAINING ON DOMESTIC ABUSE HAS HELPED WORKERS

%

Raised my awareness on domestic violence and abuse	46%
Helped me understand how to spot signs of abuse early and help with early intervention	41%
Helped me support friends and family who experience domestic abuse	35%
Helped me better understand my own family relationships	33%
Helped me support co-workers who experienced domestic abuse	32%

Helped me understand how I can educate my children on how to build healthy and respectful relationships	28%
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Prompted me to become a volunteer in the community to prevent domestic abuse and give support to survivors of domestic abuse	21%
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Many have found that a workplace policy on domestic abuse has allowed them to continue working

Of those who said the workplace policy was helpful, the most common reason for this was because it allowed the person to continue working because of the support (47%). For two fifths it helped them realise they did not have to endure the abuse alone, and it helped them better understand their own family relationships (both 42%).

The most common types of support accessed by those who found their workplace policy helped them were counselling through work (50%), the provision of additional safety and security measures at work (43%) and access to information and resources to help learn more about domestic abuse (43%).

Awareness raising and support programs for abusers are seen as the most impactful things a company can do to prevent domestic abuse

Thinking about the future and what companies can do to contribute to the prevention of domestic abuse for employees and in society at large, the top two responses were helping raise awareness about domestic abuse at work, in the family and in the community (40%) and providing support programs that help people who have been abusive to change their behaviour and develop non-abusive relationships (31%, increasing to 36% of those who have experienced domestic abuse).



About Opinium

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